

To Get Out of Skid Row

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Summary: Gwen wishes more than anything to get away. Her home on Port Royal, she feels, offers nothing to her. She feels the strong pull of the sea and the ocean air. When she finally leaves, though, where will she go? Or, more importantly, who will she meet while she sails the open seas? (Warning: first chapter[and possible future ones?] contains physical and verbal abuse!)

To Get Out of Skid Row

I blinked in the sunlight as I emerged from the shade of the shop. Though summers were nice, the light exposure was a bit of a downer at times. I moved through the crowds of people, wishing desperately for a draft of wind to reach me. As the crowd began to thin, I made eye contact with one of the soldiers of Port Royal. I froze for a moment, then quickly averted my gaze and started walking at a more brisk pace. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the man moving towards me.

Ahead of me, the crowd had thickened again and I began to panic. I heard the stern outcry of "Hey!" from the soldier. I bolted forward into the throng of citizens. My ears were flooded with the sound of protests as I pushed past people. Finally, I burst out of the bustle of the marketplace and into a desolate side street. The soldier's footsteps echoed behind me. I dodged to the side, running down an alleyway. I glanced around, frantically looking for a way out. Then, I hopped onto a barrel and hoisted myself onto the roof of a building.

I ran across the roof, leaping to the next. I saw the wall that separated Port Royal from the span of trees next to the town. Swinging down from the roof, I landed between the house's exterior and the short wall. I leaned against the cold stone, panting, and surveyed both ends of the alley. The soldier was nowhere to be seen. I breathed out a sigh and slid down the wall, closing my eyes and relaxing into a sit.

"Comfy?" a man's voice asked. My eyes shot open only to see the tip of a sword and behind it, the man who had been pursuing me. "Up you go." he motioned upwards with his sword tip. I slowly stood, glaring up at him. He pointed his sword at my chest and lifted my necklace up with it. "What's this?" he asked.

"A necklace." I grumbled. The soldier raised his eyebrow, lowering his sword.

"I know that. Where did you get it?" he rolled his eyes. I huffed, blowing a piece of hair away from my face.

"My mother. Can I go now?" I replied. This happened occasionally- not that it surprised me.

"A likely story. I will have to apprehend you." the man said, sheathing his sword. I frowned, shaking my head. At the far end of the alley, there was a sudden commotion. A few more soldiers flooded in. One of the officers stepped forward.

"Good work, Norrington." he nodded to the man in front of me. "Put the thief in irons." he ordered the other officers. Chains were clamped around my wrists in seconds. Norrington removed the necklace and placed in his superior's hands. They escorted me out of the alleyway and down the street.

"Where to?" Norrington asked, smirking. I shifted my hands in the cuffs uncomfortably.

"The slums, if you please." I smiled sarcastically at him. The scenery soon turned gloomy and dark as we entered my own sweet skid row. "Oh, left here, lads." I instructed. The head officer looked back at me, narrowing his eyes, then he knocked on the door of my house. There was a clatter and the sound of breaking glass. A ragged bum opened the door, cursing.

"What the hell d'you want?" he growled at the men. Besides me, Norrington's grip on my cuffs tightened. The smell of alcohol was prominently wafting from the drunk mess that used to be my father. I glanced at Norrington besides me, who tensed up at the sight of my father. The head officer stepped to the side and motioned to me.

"We found her in the market. We believe she stole this." he held up the necklace, dangling it by the chain. My father glared at me, the fire from the whiskey showing in his eyes. His gaze shifted from me to the necklace. He snatched it from the officer, sneering at him in disgust and annoyance.

"The only person she stole this from is her mother." he snarled. His gaze returned to me and he advanced on me. Norrington's eyes widened and he pulled me back by my arms and stepped a bit in front of me. My father didn't even make it more than two steps when he stumbled and leaned on a crate for support. "Get out of here." he growled at the officers around him. The head officer opened his mouth to object, but nodded to his men. Norrington hesitantly unlocked my bindings as the others began to leave.

"And don't come back around, you hear!?" he hollered at the men. He faced me and with lightning speed that was so uncommon in drunks,

grabbed my wrist and held me a foot off the ground. "I told you not to go into her room, didn't I? I told you!" he threw me into the house. I lay on the floor, glaring at the wooden planks. The door slammed and his heavy footsteps advanced towards me. He picked his belt off of the table and snapped it. "Get up." he ordered. I picked myself up and sat on my legs, facing away from him. "I said get up!" he yelled, swinging the buckle of the belt down. I jolted forward, wincing as the metal made contact with my shoulder blade.

"How dare you do into her room and steal something from her! You're nothing but a dirty, useless, nobody! No good for anything but thievery!" he swung the belt down once more. I clenched my hands into fists until my knuckles were white. This went on for an hour or so until the bastard got tired. He crossed the room over to his chair, dragging his feet along with his belt. The sound of the metal scrapping against the wood echoing in my ears. "Go to your room." he grumbled from his chair, downing the rest of another bottle of rum.

I slowly and painfully stood up and turned around to go up stairs. As I did so, I caught a glimpse of red by the window. I blinked a couple of time and it was gone. Once I had gotten to my room, I removed my tattered and bloodied shirt and started treating the fresh cuts and bruises on my back. The clock chimed 8 o'clock and I silently crept into my mother's room. Marquis, the drunk down stairs, used to lock it but ceased doing so when he started up drinking. On the dresser lay a music box and a picture of my mother holding a baby, and my father with his arm gaily around her. She died six years ago, when I was nine. And two years after, my father stopped caring.

Solemnly, I crossed the room to the wardrobe. I took out one of my mother's shirts and exited the room. I was the same size she had been before she caught the illness. I closed my door, put out the candle, and curled up under the rough blankets. And in the quiet loneliness of the night, I began to sob. I cried myself dry, and after that, I drifted into a painful sleep. Soon, morning would come and I would have to start the day all over again.

'My own, sweet skid row.' I thought sadly, dozing off.

End
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